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We Claim:~~Patent Claims~~

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1. An apparatus for transferring membranes to a continuously operable sealing carrousel for the heat sealing of can-like packaging materials, a rotatable transfer station being arranged upstream of the sealing carrousel, characterized in that the transfer station is designed as a cyclically driveable membrane star (10), and a cutting tool (11) for membrane-strip processing (12) is provided above the membrane star (10), it being possible for transfer of cut-out membranes (13) from the membrane strip to the membrane star (10) to be effected during the resting phases (14) of the membrane star (10) and for advancement of membranes (13) positioned on the membrane star (10) to the sealing carrousel (15) to be effected during the movement phases of the membrane star (10).

2. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a number of vacuum stations (17) are formed on the membrane star (10).

3. The apparatus as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the individual vacuum stations (17) on the membrane star (10) are designed such that, where the membranes are transferred to/received by the respective sealing head (18), the stations can be returned via an entry curve (19).

Sub a) 30 4. The apparatus as claimed in claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the membrane-strip feed (12) to the cutting tool (11) is provided laterally above the membrane star (10).

35 5. The apparatus as claimed in claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the membrane-strip feed (12) to the cutting tool (11) is provided at a feed angle of approximately 30 degrees.

6. The apparatus as claimed in claims 1 to 5, characterized in that, during each resting phase (14) of the membrane star (10), in each case two membranes (13) can be transferred from the membrane strip (12), by way of a double cutting tool (11), to the membrane star (10).

7. The apparatus as claimed in claims 1 to 6, characterized in that ejectors for the cut-out membranes (13) are integrated in each case in the cutting punches of the double cutting tool (11).

8. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a vacuum station (20) in the form of a collector/ejector is integrated within each sealing head (18) on the sealing carrousel (15).

9. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the membrane star (10) is designed such that it can be driven by a step-by-step motion linkage.

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